

## **Paula Gangopadhyay**

At the Henry Ford, we have fully embraced 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in theory and in practice, so as to speak. Our new strategic plan, which was revised in 2010, was definitely informed and inspired by IMLS's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills report. We have now overtly called out a few of these skills in our strategic plan that we feel we can offer as an institution. To deliver on the promise, we've consciously worked on developing and re-aligning products, programs, and experiences, with which we can engage various stakeholders in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development.

We've created a paradigm-shifting digital educational tool, called Innovation 101, which leverages 21<sup>st</sup> century content from the interviews available on our website called On Innovation of current day innovators like Bill Gates, Steve Wozniac, Bill Allen, Richard Baker. The teacher is expected to be a facilitator and students are expected to learn in a self-directed manner, using digital technology. So we're using 21<sup>st</sup> century content, combining it with 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching methodology, and eventually helping in the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

In collaboration with Make Magazine, we are hosting the annual Detroit Maker Faire, which is all about grassroots innovation and creativity, one of the essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

The interpretation of our upcoming 80,000 square foot exhibition, Driving America, is being explicitly informed and guided by the need for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. We're asking our visitors to critically think, critically problem-solve, dialogue, and reflect in a multi-layered way. All our self-guided itineraries for Girl Scouts and students have 21<sup>st</sup> century probes embedded in them, so we are engaging visitors more in inquiry and reflection, than just telling them facts and stories. We are creating environments to ignite creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving. And we are doing continuous staff and volunteer training and giving our staff tips and tools of how they can translate this into their own work with visitors and constituents that we serve.